LOS RANCHOS

JOINT PUBLICATION

OF THE

LAFAYETTE - ORINDA - MORAGA

HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

VOL. 1 NO. 2, NOVEMBER, 1973 BOX 103, MORAGA, CA 94556

LOS RANCHOS SAN PABLO
AND EL SOBRANTE

The story and pictures
by
Harriet F. Wahlander
Great Granddaughter of Don Victor Castro
Daughter of Jovita Castro Fitzgerald

Tuesday November 13
8:00 P.M.

Orinda School
Across from Mobil Station, Orinda Village

ORINDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Editor: Carol Leland Address: P.O.Box 82, Orinda, 94563

LOS RANCHOS SAN PABLO AND EL SOBRANTE

The community of Orinda has its beginnings in the rancho era of the Mexican government of California. According to Muir Sorrick's History of Orinda, "The families of many of the owners of the large grants in this area were related. Joaquin Moraga's wife was Maria Francisca Castro, whose father was the grantee of Rancho San Pablo. Her brothers, Victor and Juan Jose, applied in 1841 for all of the surplus land lying between the Ranchos San Antonio, San Pablo, Pinole, Valencia and Moraga." This rancho was bounded by the boundaries of the neighboring ranches, and was called El Sobrante, which means the surplus. The northern portion of Orinda lies within this area.

Harriet Fitzgerald Wahlander is a fifth generation Californian. She has recently retired from a distinguished career as a Dental Health Educator at the University of California School of Dentistry, the first dental hygientist so appointed. She later served in the same capacity with the Pittsburg Unified Schools. She received her Masters Degree the same year she was married to Mr. Adrian Wahlander and her family consists of a son and daughter and two grandchildren.

In 1971 she became an Honorary Member of the Orinda Historical Society, as did her sister Jovita Fitzgerald and cousin Victor Brennan. Mrs. Wahlander has studied the family history thoroughly, and has collected many pictures which she will share with us.

MEMBERS ATTEND CONFERENCE

President Kitty Leland, Alma Compton, Elisabeth Gudde, and Mary Ellen Jones represented the Orinda Historical Society at a Northern California Symposium of the Conference of California Historical Societies held in Mariposa on September 28 to 30. Activities included a tour of the newly-housed Mariposa County History Center and of the nearby ghost towns and sites of Mt. Bullion, Hornitos and Bear Valley, and a remarkable private library which has a set of Gelett Burgess' delightful magazine The Lark in which the world first read, "I never saw a purple cow....." Richard Dillon of the Sutro Library gave an entertaining talk at the banquet. After a tour of historic spots in Yosemite Valley, all headed for home with a reaffirmed belief in California's rich historic past.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Lafayette Society welcomes Mr. & Mrs. P.L.Pinotti, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Meyers, and Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Starks.

Orinda Society welcomes Mr. Paul Williams.

MURIETTA UNHORSED

The above conference was reported in The New York Times, and a new character added to history. The Times reported that in the early days of Mariposa this was a community of fancy hotels, painted women, and a "bandit named Walking Marietta."

* *

LAFAYETTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Editor: Angela Broadhead Address: P.O.Box 133. Lafayette 94549

OCTOBER MEETING OF THE THREE SOCIETIES

Members and guests of the three historical groups heard Mr. Cleve Cunningham speak on the "History of the Area Reservoirs" at the October 15 meeting hosted by the Lafayette society. Mrs. Gary Willcuts, program chairman, introduced the distinguished EBMUD public information officer who illustrated his talk with slides of several EBMUD properties.

According to the speaker, EBMUD was formed in the 20's to fill the need for large quantities of water to serve the huge population that was settling in the East Bay area. The Pardee Dam which was built across the Mokelumne River was one of the "engineering Marvels of the world at that time," he said. From Pardee, water is then transported to the East Bay through a 100-mile-long system of aqueducts and tunnels. Five terminal storage reservoirs (of which Lafayette is its smallest), seven filter plants, and 109 distribution pumping plants are among the modern facilities in the East Bay Water's service area.

"EBMUD has been a pioneer in water conservation," said the speaker, and although there is still much to learn in this field, EBMUD hopes to demonstrate how to reuse reclaimed water by 1975.

The second speaker of the evening made a plea for conservation of open space. Mr. Bill Chilcote, vice chairman for the Lafayette Save Open Space Committee, presented facts and figures on how to preserve Lafayette's ridges and hills.

"ACTION ANTIQUES" ON EXHIBIT

"Action Antiques" now on exhibit at the Landmarks Room of the Lafayette Federal and Loan Assn.will delight those who are intrigued by what "goes 'round and up and down." On display are antiques that might have been found in any California household, office, or farm from 1875 to the 1920's.

Featured in the main window,located at 3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd.,is a National Cash Register (1886), a tailor's iron (1887),a fluter for ruffles (1875), a Kent's knife polisher (1907), as well as a Becky Porter French-fry cutter (early 1920), and a Lorillard's chewing tobacco cutter (1920's). The adjoining display windows are filled with kitchen tools as well as copies of pages from Sears, Roebuck and Co. catalogs. "We thought you would like to see the prices of these tools," said Mrs. Herbery Breckling, exhibits chairman.

Principal contributor is Ken Mullen of Walnut Creek,a member of the Early American Industry Assn. and the Oakland Hobby Council, who has exhibited widely. Also contributing is Clark Linwood, Lafayette with a 1901 Underwood typewriter & a Standard Talking Machine (1903) table model complete with horn.The society wishes to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Linwood for his donation of the Underwood typewriter to our artifacts collection.

* *

MORAGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Editor: Brother Dennis P.O.Box 103, Moraga 94556

THE STUFF OF WHICH MEMORIES ARE MADE

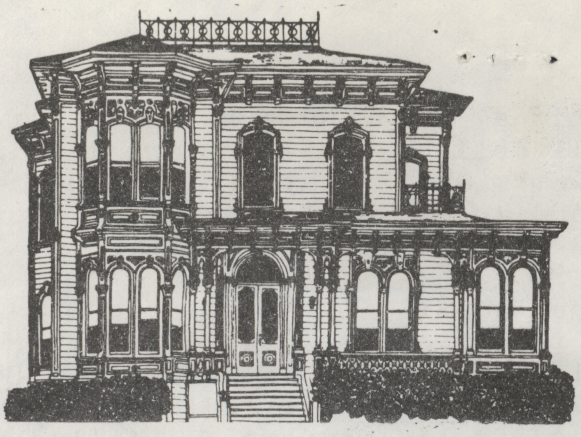
Those who attended the Society's eighth annual banquet on October 13 at St. Mary's College went away convinced that history can be fun. The food, the decor and the entertainment were keyed to the theme of the banquet: A Fandango at the Adobe in 1855.

Everything was historically authentic. From the moment one entered Dryden Hall, the scene was delightfully mid-19th century. And gathering around the "groaning board" during the social hour guests savored the foods, and thus the history. of the period. Corizos, Nopales, venison, spiced meatballs, spiced ripe olives, beef jerkey, salt sardines, adobados, bean dips, beef tongue, seasoned eggs, and other tempting delights were spread on the beautiful and sumptious table, while sherries, ports and angelicas were served at the bar.

The dinner too was a historically authentic feast that Jose Joaquin Moraga himself might have served to his guests. Following Don Manuel's description of a Fandango at the Adobe, as if by magic, on came the entertainers: Maruja Alvarez, the dancer, and Robin Brown, the guitarist. And they were splendid, as they recreated the music and the dances that were popular when the Rancho Los Palos Colorados was young. These popular young artists completely enchanted the audience, and the tumultuous applause brought them back to the floor again and again.

The success of the banquet was due to excellent committee work. Usually a banquet such as this is the work of one or two active members. Not this one! More than a score of devoted workers gave unstintingly of their time and effort and talent to make this year's banquet a most enjoyable & memorable event. They gave us an evening truly worth remembering. The society is grateful to all of them.

* *
* *



CAMERON-STANFORD HOUSE

The Cameron-Stanford House Preservation Assn. needs your help! The restoration of this lovely house, the last remaining Victorian mansion to grace the shores of Lake Merritt, is well under way. For over a year a committee has been researching the history of the home. It was built in 1876 by Will Cameron and his bride Alice Marsh Cameron, the only daughter of John Marsh. In 1878 David Hewes & his wife Matilda moved into the home. Hewes was a founder of the Oakland Academy which later became the University of California, and gave the golden spike which joined the transcontinental railroad. In 1883 it was the home of Josiah Stanford and his wife Helen Allyne Barker. In 1903 Captain John T. Wright, a retired sea captain, and his wife Terrilla bought it. In 1907 they sold it to the City of Oakland and it was remodeled to house the Oakland Public Museum.

The association hopes to restore and furnish the two front parlors and the solarium in precisely the original manner. PLEASE if you have any pictures of, or information about the home, its residents, furnishings, the neighborhood, or if you know anyone who does kindly contact Mrs. Edward R. Smith, 73 Orchard Road, Orinda, or you may phone her at 254-1371.

LOS RANCHOS / EL RANCHO

MORAGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOX 103, MORAGA, CA 94556

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Moraga, Ca 94556
Permit No.14

TIME VALUE

Mr. & Mrs. Paul Broadhead
965 Yorkshire Court
Lafayette, CA 94549